Project I.D. No.147

NAME: Katagihara, Toshiko DATE OF BIRTH: 9/19/1889 PLACE OF BIRTH: Nagano
Age: 85 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: High School

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 9/19/15 Age: 26 M.S. M Port of entry: _____
Occupation/s: 1. Designer/Dressmaker 2. Table manager 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. San Francisco, Ca. 2. _____ 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Tanforan
Name of relocation center: Topaz, Utah
Dispensation of property: _____ Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Sewing teacher 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: San Francisco, California

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: 1945
Address/es: 1. San Francisco, California 2. Japan
3. Came back to San Francisco, California
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Kazu Morisawa Date: 8/24/75 Place: San Francisco, Ca
Translator unlisted

Name: Toshiko Katagihara

Bieth Date: 9/19/1889

Birth Place: nagano

The time of entrance into the States: Sep. 19, 1915

How Old was she when she Entered into the States: 26

Major Occupation: Teacher

Camp:

Interviewer: Kazu Morisawa
Interview Date:

Translator:
Typist:

I was born in Yamabuki, Shimoina-Gun, Nagano-Ken, Japan in the year of Meiji Twenty-Two, September, Nineteenth. My childhood, in all honesty, was not an easy one. My mother passed away when I was two years old, and my father, unable to properly care for two very small children, was forced to separate the family. My younger brother was sent to live with his father's side of the family, and the burden of caring for my upbringing was placed upon my maternal grandmother. Life, as I recall, was extremely difficult.

The family was poor and many sacrifices were required in order for us to make ends meet. This life of hardship was made even greater by the fact that I was denied the opportunity to pursue an education.

Q: What was your fathers occupation?

A: My father was a principal of Yamabuki grammar school in Yamabuki-City. He had instilled in me the importance of an education, but this was a luxury which we simply could not afford.

Following my mother's death, my father travelled extensively throughout Japan, eventually establishing a residence in Nara, where remarried.

Q: How old were you?

Ten years old.

This was not, however, to be a permanent residence, for my father departed for America to pursue his own education, soon thereafter. My step-mother was a dedicated and strong woman who managed to maintain the house and eventually sent for my brother and I to join her in Nara. The knowledge that our family would once again be reunited and the promise of an education heightened my excitement.

2

To a little girl of 12 whose world extended only to the surrounding mountains, the trip to Nara was awe inspiring. Taking the train for the first time, I realized the true limitation of my development and the wide gulf that must be overcomed in order for me to find a productive position in ~~thsi~~ this world.

Although the promise of an education was not immediately realized, at the age of 15, I entered Giei Gakko in Gose where I was to spend the next four years in intensive study. At the conclusion of the fourth year, I was able to graduate with honors. The entire process of acquiring and education was an extremely pleasant experience and wonderful memories remain with me to this day. Through the efforts of an especially considerate instructor, I was able to obtain a teaching post in an elementary school. First, as a student and later as a teacher, my direct association with education was to continue for another four years.

My relationship with my father was, at best, quite formal. Because of the circumstances which resulted in our separation, I was never able to fully understand this man. I did, however, hold him in high esteem, therefore, when news of his return from America was communicated to me, I immediately resigned my teaching post to be with his family once again. The reunion was joyous, of course, but there was one news which came as quite a shock. During his stay in America, my father met several young students who, like himself. were there to get an education. Apparently an arrangement of marriage was made between one such student and myself. The idea of an arranged marriage may sound awkward to people of today, but in the early 1900's this was an accepted custom in Japan.

Following a brief period of courtship, we were married. In May 27, 1915 a daughter was born. After the birth of our daughter, my husband once again departed for America leaving us in the care of his mother's household. In contrast to my childhood days this was a rather easy going and relaxed period. This household was rather well-to-do and the hardships of my childhood was foreign to them. This did not, however, ease the pain and anxiety of a young bride and mother who was separated from her husband. My mother-in-law, recognizing my lonesomeness, urged me to join my husband in the United States, and promised to care for my daughter. This was perhaps the most agonizing decision of my life. As much as I hated to leave my daughter, I realized that a wife should be at her husband's side, and hoping that the separation from my daughter would be a belief one, I left for the United States with great reluctance.

Q: In what year was this?

In September 19, 1915.

Upon my arrival in the United, I was greeted by my husband and his friends. At a welcome party afterwards, I made several inquiries concerning the possibility of attending a nearby church. A young mán immediately stood up andoffered to take me to the church the following Sunday. This young man was baptized only a week before, and from that moment until his death in 1973, his family acted as a consant guardian for my family. His name was Yohei Tanaka. At the church, I was introduced to Mr. _____ who took the trouble to painstakingly outline the meaning of the bible until I was able to fully master the meaning of the scriptures. I was baptized into the faith later that same year.

Reunited with my husband, accepted warmly by new friends, and baptized into a new faith, the first year in America was a time of great hapiness.

Unfortunately, my happiness was not to last. An incident arose the following year which drastically altered the course of my life. Personal problems between my husband and I reached a point where a permanent separation seemed to be the only answer. Following his return to Japan, my life was, quite frankly, shattered. My emotional state was in such disarray that often thoughts of ending my life raced through my mind. During this crucial moment in my life, I had an occassion to run into Mrs. Michiko Fujita in a nearby park. She was quite amazed at my personal appearance, and expressed great concern. She informed me that a minister from Japan, Rev.Kiyama, would give the sermon the coming Sunday and urged me to attend. It is my belief that my meeting with Rev. Kiyama the following Sunday represented my rebirth. Until that time , inspite of my attempts to master the holy bible, I did not really understand the true meaning of my commitment to my faith. The title of his Sermons was " THE JOY OF BELIEF IN THE JESES CHRIST." The scripture was takenfrom JOHN 3:16, For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

I recognized the shallowness of my faith and made a commitment to seek redemption and rectification in the eyes of the Lord.

This event brought to an end the first phase of my life and ushered in a period of both hardship and great personal development. As I look back on my 86 years of existence, this period is perhaps the most memorable. It was during this period of trial that I was able to discover the true meaning of life and fidn comfort and direction that would guide me for the rest of my life. My most imme-diate and pressing problem was to find some way to support myself. Assessing my personal skills and the employment pitcure, I came to the conclusion that designing and sewing offered the most promising future. At that time, European designs were particularly in vogue and I was fortunate to obtain an apprenticeship position with Mr. Gammier, a French designer of considerable fame. Mr. Gammier was an excellent teacher and under his close tutelage, my skills were refined and polished It was his estimation that two years would be required for me to fully master the intricacies of the art, and just he promised, at the end of my second year,he urged me to open a shop of my own. Mr. Gannier had, by this time, received numerous offers of employment from the motion piture industry in Southern Califom ia, and his acceptance of this employment offer signaled the termination of his business in San Francisco.

Although, at his instance, I gave great consideration to opening my own shop, I reluctantly reached the conclusion that the atmosphere of racial antagonism toward Japanese residents was so strong that it did not warrant my taking this option. Mr. gammier understood the reasons for my decision and quickly secured a a position for me as a table manager with Madame Alma. I was warned that Madame Alma was an extremely difficult person to work with, but I did not find this to be the case. I found her to be an extremely hard working, dedicated, and warm human being. Our working relationship was characterized by mutual respect and admiration, and I am proud to say that Alma was a friend.

In the 1920's, the Japanese community in America, due to the historical nature of Japanese immigration to this country, was overwhelmingly male dominated. Talk of marriage was brought up on several occassion, but I did not give serious consideration to this matter until I was introduced to Dr. Katagihara. He was a doctor only recently graduated from dental school. His future was somewhat uncertain at that time and it seemed as though marriage was out of the question. We were, however, deeply in love, and with the generous moral support from our friends and particularly the wise counsel of Dr. Sturge, the marriage arrangement was finalized.

Dr. Sturge was source of great inspiration and faith to both young and senior members of the church. His dedication to the faith was evident in everything he did, and though him we received the protection and guidance of the lord. Our command of the English language was rather poor, and inspite of Mr. Tomioka valiant effort at interpretation, it often prevented us from understanding everything Dr. Sturge said. There was, however, no misunderstanding the beauty

and eloquence of this man. Although 50 years have passed, I can still recall vividly the bible session conducted by Dr. Sturge. Following his usual me ticulous review of Corinthian 13, he was overcome by pain and forced to retire to his room. Two days later, he was dead. His passing left a great void in both my heart and the church. The circumstances of his birth was never made clear to me, but there is no mistaking the glory of his work.

1941 was a memorable year, in many ways, for residence of Japanese ancestry in America. With the outbreak of war in the Pacific, racial introlerance once again erupted and contaminated the society with its filfth. After a few months of uncertainty, it became evident that hopes for an event handed treatment of Japanese-Americans was not to be realized. Tears of shame were shed in abundance as the orders implementing the relocation program separated my family from my friends. The coming years would seriously test my faith in the promise of American life. How was it possible that in a nation founded by immigrants fleeing political and religious intolerance, such actions could be justified? Although I do not now harbor and did not then harbor feelings of bitterness, the evacuation program was a cause ofr great sadness and disappointment. My husband and I were taken first ot Tanforan recetracks and later relocated to Camp Topas (Sic) deep in the desert of Utah. The desert climate was a drastic change from the mild environment of San Francisco, and all the residents of the coast experienced a difficult period of adjustment.

I was assigned a teaching post in the camp sewing class and my husband found himself assigned to the camp infirmary. Perhaps the most memorable moment of our camp experience was the brilliant evening sunset which all of us would gather together and admire.

In 1945, the war had come to a conclusion, and we were allowed to leave the camp. Upon our return to San Francisco

Q: After the war where did you reside at?

My husband and I found temporary lodging in the Sturge Building.

Q: What happened to the home you lived in prior to the war?

We discovered that our homes were occupied and our properities lost. We shared the living quaters with eight other families who met with similar fate. It was here that Mrs. Maruoka and I were appointed as the church . We were the first women to be so honored. Needless to say we took great pride in this position. Ten month later, we were able to rent a house and my husband reopened his practice. The next 6 years were years of contentment and rebuilding. Life was hard but remarkable in many ways. Then, in 1952, after a brief period of illness, my husband passed away. He was a man of quiet dignity with strength and compassion in just the right proporion. His influence upon my development was vast, and my love and respect for him without end. His passing was a great blow to me, but he had given me the strength and courage to carry on.

Perhaps the most memorable and profound legacy of my husband was given to me one evening over the dinner table. The previous week, I had secured a position with Ransohoff's of San Francisco. The employment picture for for Japanese had improved considerably since the end of the war, and I went to Ransohoff's with great excitement and anticipation.

My hopes were somewhat dimned the first day when I was assigned as an assistant to a lady of rather questionable temperament. Her name was Mrs. Mateno, and she was in charge of the department. Although she praised my work, she was such a difficult person to work with that at the end of each day I seriously contemplated the termination of my job. At the end of the first week, I gathered my things and decided to quit. My husband listened to my explanation that evening, and when I had exhausted the story he replied in a quiet voice, "you can become arrogant a times." With that simple statement, I realized instantly exac-tly what had taken place. I had, until that time taken great pride in my ability to handle new and often threatening situation, and somehow overcome the obstacle facing me. In my relationship with other people, I cannot recall a single moment, when I was forced to raise my voice. It was my belief that by treating others with respect and consideration, they would in return react in similar fashion. This sense of tolerance and understanding was one of the casulties of the war, and my husband's gentle reminder was sufficient for me to to realize the change I had experienced. Thoughts of quitting was immediatly discarded. The following Monday, when I reported for work, Mrs. Mateno was surprised and delighted. She took me into her office and told me that I was the first assistant ever to report to work for a second wook. She admitted that she was a difficult persons to work with, thanked me profusely, and asked for my support. If it were not for my own revelation the day before, I could have believed the change in this person's behavior. I was simply delighted. Until my decision to

10

r eturn to Japan, Mrs. Mateno was a close and dear friend. The gentle reminder of my husband has stayed with me to this day, and has shaped my actions ever since.

My daughter had, by this time, established a rather large beauty salon in Japan. She was quite talented and abbitious and the prospect for her business was good. When she expressed an interest in Western hair style, I immediately extended an invitation to come to the United States My t rue motive for this invitation was to introduce her to Chritianity. After a brief stay she was baptized into the faith Rev. Kawamorita and returned to Japan.

Following a year of serious correspondence, I finally accepted my daughter's offer to live in Japan. Believing my departure to be a permanent one, I bid an especially tearful good by to San Francisco and my friends to start a new life in the nation of my birth.

To be quite frank, the life in Japan was not an enjoyable one. Pampered by the workers and every whim promptly satisfied, I some how felt a sense of loss and confusion. I had worked all my life and I simply could not make the transition to a quiet life of retirement. With each passing day my yearning for the United States and my old life style grew stronger. Finally, I was able to persuade my daughter to close her business and return to the United States with me. In 1955, I returned to the United States to prepare for my daigjter's move to this country. 2 year later, my daughter and her family was able to join me in San Francisco. Life was, of course, difficult, but the family was reunited and the bond of love strengthened.

In 19___ Mrs. Maruoka and I were appointed as the church
My education and health has been quite limited, but my dedication to the church has never been stronger. It was my desire to do everything in my power to further the cause of the faith, and this new post was accepted with great anticipation. The church had given me the strength to sustain myself when life seemed almost unbearable It was my hope that I could, in some way, convey the mesaage of the church to others.

In 1967 , while taking part in a _____ tournament, I
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suffered a debilitating stroke. My speech was hampered, and movement was quite restricted. Through regorious therapy and the unending help of my frientds, I was able to completely recover from this illness Now, as I approach the 86 year of my life, I cansay in all sincerety that my life ~~is~~ filled with contentment. Nearly all of my dreams and aspirationsl have been fulfilled, and I ook to the future with unending optimism.